

PRAYERS & LITURGIES
FOR
Animal Companions



ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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PRAYERS & LITURGIES FOR COMPANION ANIMALS

Caring for our companion animals is an important part of who we are as people of faith and as stewards of God's creation. Our lives, and the lives of our companion animals, are deeply enriched through our time together. It is hoped that this resource of prayers will enrich our shared lives by marking the events, from welcoming into a new home to final goodbyes, with the acknowledgement of God's presence and grace.

Prayers and Thanksgivings	pg. 3
Liturgy for a New Companion Animal	pg. 4
Prayers for Lost Companion Animals	pg. 6
Liturgy for Sick Animals	pg. 6
Prayers for Healing	pg. 7
Prayers When Facing Death	pg. 7
Liturgy for a Dead or Dying Companion Animal	pg. 8
Burial for a Companion Animal	pg. 9
Sources	pg. 14

PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS

O God, we thank you for making the animals to brighten our lives. Help us to save them from danger as Noah did. Help us to love them and care for them as St. Francis did. And when we see the animals that you have made, help us to remember that you are holy and worthy of praise. In the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

O God, who has made all the earth and every creature that dwells therein: Help us, we pray you, to treat with compassion the living creatures entrusted to our care, that they may not suffer from our neglect nor become the victims of any cruelty; and grant that in caring for them we may find a deeper understanding of your love for all creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty of earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers; for the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers. We praise you for these good gifts, and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation, to the honor and glory of your Name, now and for ever. **Amen.**

O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

O God, who made everything good, teach us to love what you have made. Help us to see you in the stars and planets, the trees and flowers, the rocks and the rivers, and especially in these pets of ours you have entrusted to our care. How great is your name, O Lord our God, through all the earth. **Amen.**

God of manifold blessings, source of all that is good and true and holy, raise us up to see the world through your eyes so that we may treasure each blessed creature alive with your Spirit and touched by your creative hand; and may the blessing of this wonderful God Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier be upon us now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord God, you have made all living things, and you are even more wonderful than the things you have made. We thank you for giving us our companion animals who are our friends and who give us so much joy in life. We cherish the companions we have now, and we remember the companions we have loved and lost. May we always be reminded of the joy they have given to us. May we likewise, realize that as our companion animals trust us to take care of them, so we should trust you to take care of us, and in our taking care of them we share in your love for all your creatures. Grant this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LITURGY FOR A NEW COMPANION ANIMAL

Leader The Spirit of the Lord is with us.
All **And with all creation.**
Leader Let us praise our Creator.
All **And give thanks for the wonderful earth.**
Leader Let us sing a song of praise with the whole creation.
All **Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.**

A Reading from Hosea (2:18)

And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety.

 The Word of the Lord.
All **Thanks be to God.**

The leader continues

All living creatures you have put under our protection and we are to care for them as you care for us.

Mindful of the great responsibility you have placed upon us, we now renew our covenant with these creatures in our care, and pray that we may be faithful to them as you are faithful to us.

May the unity of peace which you have established between all species never be broken by our violence, and may our lives reflect that generosity of spirit which we see manifest in your Son, Jesus Christ.

God of unity and peace, send us now your Holy Spirit that we may feel a deeper kinship with all living creatures and by this act of renewal reaffirm the bond of covenant with all animals in our care.

Leader Will you name this creature?

Respondent **(The name of the animal is given.)**

Leader Will you care for N. as God's own creature?

All **I will with God's grace.**

Leader Will you be mindful of N.'s Christ-like vulnerability?

All **I will with God's grace.**

Leader Will you love and protect N. so long as he/she lives?

All **I will with God's grace.**

Leader Will you be faithful and kind in good times and bad?

All **I will with God's grace.**

The family is invited to touch/pat/stroke the animal as a sign of the covenant reaffirmed between them.

Leader May the God of the new covenant of Jesus Christ grant us grace to fulfill our promise and to show mercy to other creatures as God has shown mercy to us. **Amen.**

PRAYERS FOR LOST COMPANION ANIMALS

Blessed are you, Lord God, for all living creatures you have made. You keep them in your care and not one of them is lost without you knowing. They glorify you, each in its own way, and speak to us of your beauty and love. Bless them and keep them from harm. They unquestionably accept their place in the rhythm of your creation. May we respect them and cherish them for they are your gift to us; through them may we come to know you better and praise you, their Creator. Blessed be the love and joy that they bring to us. **Amen.**

Holy God, we pray for N. who is lost. Guard him/her from all fear and bring him/her in safety to this day's end, whether it be with his/her family on earth, or in heaven. Grant peace and comfort to his/her human family as they face the unknown in the days ahead. **Amen.**

LITURGY FOR SICK ANIMALS

Leader The Spirit of the Lord is with us.
All **And with all creation.**
Leader Let us praise our Creator.
All **And give thanks for the wonderful earth.**
Leader Let us sing a song of praise with the whole creation.
All **Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.**

Leader continues

We have come together to proclaim the work of Christ our liberator: the very agent of God who abolishes death, heals the sick, identifies with the outcast, defends the vulnerable, cares for the poor, frees us from evil, and inaugurates a kingdom of peace and justice for all creatures.

We praise you who liberates us and all creation from suffering and injustice. As Christ cared for the human poor and despised, so we must care for those in our power [and especially our fellow creatures abused and tortured in our midst.] Especially we pray for these

innocent animals who suffer through no fault of their own and for whom Christ also died.

Leader Christ the healer
All **liberate you from pain.**
Leader Christ the redeemer
All **restore you to health.**
Leader Christ the new creature
All **make you whole.**

The leader continues

May the Lord give us courage to defend the weak and the vulnerable, and make us strong in mercy and generosity to advance God's justice until the end of our time on earth. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING

Holy Father, turn your face, we pray, towards N. a creature of your own creation, and by the power of the Holy Spirit may your healing love descend upon them through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

May the healing power of the living God, from whom all creation was deemed to be good, be upon N. May Jesus Christ Son of the living God heal and preserve you. **Amen.**

PRAYERS WHEN FACING DEATH

O God our Creator and Sustainer, receive our prayers for N. We thank you for the love and companionship we have shared together. Give us grace now to accept the limits of our human healing as we commend N. to your merciful care. Strengthen us, we pray, in this time of trial and help us to continue to serve and care for all creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord of all wisdom and source of all life, we come before you as we struggle with decisions about life and death that rightly belong to

you alone. We confess that we act with uncertainty now. Give us your help, and guide us, merciful God, in your loving concern for N., and all of creation, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

God of Wisdom: Bless the decisions we have made in hope, in sorrow, and in love; that as we place N. in your care, our choices and our actions may be encompassed by your perfect will; through Jesus Christ who died and rose for us. **Amen.**

LITURGY FOR A DEAD OR DYING PET

Leader Let us sing to the Lord a new song;
All **a song for all the creatures of the earth.**
Leader Let us rejoice in the goodness of God
All **shown in the beauty of all things.**

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans (8:18-21)

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

A Reading from the Revelation to John (Rev. 21:1, 4-5a, 6)

I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. And he shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

All The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God.

Let us pray.

This we know: every living thing is yours and returns to you. As we ponder this mystery we give you thanks for the life of and we now commit him/her into your loving hands. Gentle God: fragile is your world, delicate are your creatures, and costly is your love which bears and redeems us all.

Holy Creator, give us eyes to see and ears to hear how every living thing speaks to us of your love. Let us be awestruck at your creation and daily sing your praises. Especially, create within us a spirit of gratitude for the life of this beloved pet who has lived among us and given us freely of his/her love. Even in our sorrow we have cause for joy for we know that all creatures who died on earth shall live again in your new creation. Amen.

BURIAL FOR A COMPANION ANIMAL

Suitable for the burial of a companion animal

This service may be used at any time for the burial of a companion animal. The participation of clergy is not needed. The parts in bold are said by all those gathered, the other prayers are said by an individual(s)

Canticle 12 A Song of Creation *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini*

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

In the high vault of heaven, glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Let the earth glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills, and all that grows upon the earth, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams, *

**O whales and all that move in the waters.
All birds of the air, glorify the Lord,*
sing praise and give honor for ever.
Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild,*
and all you flocks and herds and all you cats and dogs.
O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.**

**Let us glorify the Lord: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; *
sing praise and give honor for ever.
In the high vault of heaven, glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.**

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, we remember before you today N.'s beloved companion. We thank you for giving him/her to us to be a source of abundant love, affection, and joy. In your compassion, comfort us who grieve. Give us faith to commit this beloved creature of your own making to your care, for you live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Readings

(other suggestions Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalm 148:7-14; Tobit 5:21-6:2a; Matthew 10:27-31; Mark 16:14-15; Romans 8:19-25; Revelation 4:1-2, 6b-7, 9-11)

A reading from Job (12:7-10)

'But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm 104:25, 28b-30

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
 In wisdom you have made them all;
 the earth is full of your creatures.
When you open your hand
 they are filled with good things.
When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
 when you take away their breath,
 they die and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
 and you renew the face of the ground.

THE PRAYERS

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

God, your blessed Son, Jesus, told us that not even one tiny sparrow
is forgotten in your sight. Strengthen our confidence in your love for
all your creatures; in your goodness,
Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.

Loving God, you brought this beloved animal into the life of N. [and
N.] to share kindness, joy, and faithful companionship: Receive our
thanks and praise for the community between your animals and
your people, and all the ways in which we bless each other's lives; in
your goodness,
Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.

Gracious God, you have given us the blessing and responsibility of caring for animals: If in any way we have failed in that responsibility, we ask for your pardon and trust in your mercy; in your goodness, **Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.**

These biddings may be used when appropriate.

Dear God, the source of all life, wisdom, and love, bring your peace to N., into whose hands was placed the decision to end N.'s suffering. Give him/her comfort in the knowledge of a loving decision well made; in your goodness, **Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.**

Holy God, we pray for N., for the loss of his/her companion, and for all pets and animal companions. Help us to care for their needs, to tend their injuries, to heal their illnesses, and to relieve their suffering. Grant us wisdom to care for all the creatures of the earth and to respect their place in your Creation; in your goodness, **Blessed Creator, hear our prayer.**

A period of silence may be kept.

The burial, or scattering of ashes, may take place here, followed by this prayer.

We return N.'s remains to the earth with gratitude for your care for us and for all that you have made. Your mercy is over all your works, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

The following hymn may be said

**All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voices, let us sing, Alleluia, Alleluia
Bright burning sun with golden beams,
Pale silver moon that gently gleams!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise the Father, praise the Son, And praise the Spirit,
Three in One!**

O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

God of creation, through your great mercy you renew us: send us now back to the love and labor of this day with joy and compassion in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen**

All life is interwoven.
All life is a gift from God.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SOURCES:

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Apologies to Unknown Sources for prayers gathered from various
church's liturgies for The Blessing of the Animals.

**SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND SCHOOL
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